

Montgomery County Commission on Child Care



Annual Report
2015-2016



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COMMISSION ON CHILD CARE

MEMORANDUM

November 28, 2016

TO: The Honorable Isiah Leggett, Montgomery County Executive
The Honorable Nancy Floreen, President, Montgomery County Council

FR: Edward Krauze, Chair, Commission on Child Care

SUBJECT: The Commission on Child Care 2015-2016 Report and 2016-2017 Priorities

The Commission on Child Care (CCC) is pleased to submit its 2015-2016 report and 2016-2017 priorities. The mission of the CCC is to advise the County Executive and County Council on the development, implementation and effectiveness of government policies, programs and services that enhance community support for quality, affordable and accessible child care.

The CCC is comprised of a committed group of volunteers who are dedicated to raising awareness on issues involving quality, affordability and accessibility in the early care and education arena. Membership includes parents, center and family child care providers, and representatives from the business community, general public and government agencies with interests in child care. The Commission is supported through staff efforts from the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services.

Early care and education experiences are critical to ensuring that children have the foundation for school readiness and the basis for lifelong learning and success. Funding spent on child care and early education is an investment in our social and economic future.

Montgomery County was one of the early leaders in its support of child care and early education. The needs of our youngest and most impressionable have only continued to grow. We must keep up with our children's growing needs by investing in them financially (Recommendation #1 – Working Parents Assistance Program) and through our commitment to making our County's bureaucratic systems among the best in the county (Recommendation #2 – Child Care in Public Space reform).

We believe we can make a difference and continue to make an impact on the lives of our youngest citizens and their families. We need your continued help and support to move these pressing issues forward.

We wish to acknowledge and thank our commissioners and other stakeholders for their commitment and determination in doing this work. We look forward to continuing the important work of this commission and continuing our relationship with public officials in the County and State.

The Commission on Child Care

Vision

Access to quality, affordable child care for all Montgomery County families.

Mission

To advise the County Executive and County Council on the development, implementation, and effectiveness of government policies, programs, and services that enhance community support for quality, affordable, and accessible child care.

Purpose

Section 27-62 of the Montgomery County Code provides authority for the Commission on Child Care to “advise the County Executive and County Council on the development of policies, programs, and services that enhance community support for high quality, affordable, and accessible child care.”

Meetings

The full Commission meets on the third Wednesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at 1401 Rockville Pike, Lobby Level Early Childhood Training Center, Rockville, MD 20852. All meetings are open to the public.

A significant portion of the Commission's work is accomplished through the Executive, Programmatic Issues, Public Policy, and Membership Committees. Volunteers from the general public are invited to assist the committees. Committee meetings take place on the first Wednesday of the month at 1401 Rockville Pike, with the Programmatic Issues Committee and Public Policy Committee meeting concurrently at 6:30 p.m., and the Executive Committee meeting at 7:30 p.m. All meetings are open to the public.

Please call 240-777-1019; TTY 240-777-1009 for more information regarding full Commission and Committee meetings.

Membership

The Commission has 17 voting members and six to eight non-voting members appointed by the County Executive and confirmed by the County Council. Membership includes parents, center and family child care providers, and representatives from the business community, general public, and government agencies with interests in child care. The Commission is supported through staff effort from the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services.

Commission Year 2015 - 2016

Voting Members

Parent Representatives

Lindsey Allard Agnamba
Hashan Chowdhury
Brigid Howe
Edward Krauze
Laura Seminario-Thornton

Child Care Representatives

Rosalba Bonilla-Acosta
Michelle Green
Diana Holzberger
Bernadine Occhiuzzo
Shaun Rose
Greg Smith

Business and General Public Representatives

Linda Janulis
Barbara Warman
Dr. Mayme Williams

Non-Voting Members

Dr. Barbara Andrews, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services
Pamela Dunn, Montgomery County Planning Board
Carl Eggleston, Maryland State Department of Education, Office of Child Care
Yvonne Iscandari, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services
Claudia Simmons, Montgomery County Public Schools
April Kaplan, Montgomery County Collaboration Council for Children, Youth, and Families, Inc.

Staff

Erin Stillwell, Program Manager, Commission on Child Care
Department of Health and Human Services

Membership

Commission Year 2016-2017

Voting Members

Parent Representatives

Lindsay Allard Agnamba
Hashan Chowdhury
Brigid Howe
Jessica Kelley
Edward Krauze

Child Care Representatives

Michelle Belski
Rosalba Bonilla-Acosta
L'Ornya Bowie
Diana Holzberger
Laura Seminario-Thornton
Greg Smith
Lara Woodruff

Business and General Public Representatives

Sybil Philip
Greg Stevens
Barbara Warman
Dr. Mayme Williams

Non-Voting Members

Dr. Barbara Andrews, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services
Pamela Dunn, Montgomery County Planning Board
Blaise DeFazio, Montgomery County, Community Use of Public Facilities
Carl Eggleston, Maryland State Department of Education, Office of Child Care
Yvonne Iscandari, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services
Claudia Simmons, Montgomery County Public Schools
April Kaplan, Montgomery County Collaboration Council for Children, Youth, and Families, Inc.

Staff

Erin Stillwell, Program Manager, Commission on Child Care
Department of Health and Human Services

Recommendation#1

Ensure that the Working Parents Assistance Program supports families' access to quality child care by adequately funding subsidies for eligible parents.

The Working Parents Assistance Program (WPA) was designed in 1986 to help families obtain quality, licensed child care and support family self-sufficiency. The WPA program was created to serve middle income working families as well as support lower income working families in the face of rising child care costs and the cost of living in the County.

The goal is accessibility and affordability of high quality child care for all working families. Providing working families access to such care is not only an essential component for a thriving workforce, but a crucial component of a child's early development.

Every child in our County, including our youngest learners, deserves a strong start!

The Commission appreciates the County Council's approval of the WPA Workgroup recommendations for structural changes and for the Council's investment in increased funding for WPA.

There is still more work to do!

With rising child care costs and the overall high cost of living in Montgomery County, the WPA subsidy amounts no longer provide a meaningful supplement for families to access quality child care programs that promote school readiness. Therefore, too many young children arrive at kindergarten lagging behind their peers and the County must then spend even more resources to try and help them to catch up—a vicious circle commonly referred to as the “achievement gap.”

The Commission recommends that the County continue to increase funding of WPA up to the level recommended in the original WPA workgroup report. If the County was willing to invest an extra \$250,000 dollars in WPA funding, **34 additional children** could be served at the current subsidy level. And if the County were willing to double that funding up to \$500,000, **68 additional children** could be served.

The graphic below illustrates the investment outcome of the number of additional children who could be served if supplementary funding was provided to the Working Parents Assistance Program

Every child is worth the investment!

#	If Additional Funding is	Average Monthly Subsidy per Child	Projected Number of Additional Children Served for 12 Months	Projected Number of Additional Families Served for 12 Months
1	\$250,000	\$610	34	22
2	\$500,000	\$610	68	46

(Note: The above calculations are based on the following scenarios: 1) the average monthly subsidy amount per child from May to August 2016 is \$610 and 2) the ratio for the number of children per family from May to August 2016 is 1.52. The calculations above do not include any consideration of attrition nor replacement mode. The subsidy amount represents 70 percent towards the cost of care.)



Recommendation #2

Create a more transparent, uniform and consistent system for Child Care in Public Space that better serves families and children and better encourages and facilitates the operation of high quality child care programs.

Since the 1980's Child Care in Public Space (CCIPS) has been administered by several different County entities (CUPF, DHHS and MCPS), each with different missions, timelines, procedures and policies. The Commission has attempted for many years to tackle some of the public space issues. Providers and parents have felt frustrated and excluded from the process.

The Commission understands that a full list of the re-bid cycle for CUPF spaces is posted on the CUPF website and that both CUPF and DHHS publish the names of programs that are awarded space via the selection process and that DHHS has provided materials on quality child care to CUPF for inclusion in the CUPF committee orientation process. These are positive steps, but they do not resolve all of the concerns regarding the CUPF process or the continued confusion for providers and families due to the existence of the separate entities leasing space for child care.

Last year an independent audit of CUPF procedures was completed and in the spring strategic planning for early care and education for the County was initiated. The Commission recommends that the audit and plan inform the creation of a more streamlined process of child care in public space that provides for the highest quality child care so that families in Montgomery County can access quality and affordable child care.

- 1) Examine the current CUPF regulation considering the completed CUPF audit and the strategic plan for early care and education, as well as child care provider and family experiences with the rebid process. Assure that all child care in public space under the regulation supports children, families, child care businesses and results in high quality programs throughout County space.**
- 2) Continue to evaluate consolidation of CCIPS and to create a rebid process that provides for a simpler, more transparent system and that provides more certainty for families and for child care providers.**

Commission Activities 2015-2016

Guest Speakers, Presentations and Collaborations with Other Groups:

- The full Commission met with Ms. Lily Qi, Office of the County Executive, to learn more about the role of child care in the Montgomery County Economic Development Strategic Plan (November 18, 2015)
- The full Commission met with Ms. Tamieka Thomasson, Program Manager, Child Care in Public Space, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services to receive updates and learn about continued efforts of DHHS Child Care in Public Space (November 18, 2015)
- The vice chair of the Commission attended a meeting with Ms. Uma Ahluwalia, Director, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and discussed DHHS and Commission priorities (November 23, 2015)
- The full Commission met with Ms. Elizabeth A. Kelley, Director, Office of Child Care, Maryland State Department of Education regarding MD EXCELS and Child Care Licensing/Credentialing (January 20, 2016)
- The full Commission met with Ms. JoAnn Barnes, Chief, Children, Youth and Families, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) regarding the proposed budget and funding for the Working Parents Assistance Program (March 16, 2016)
- The Programmatic Issues Committee met with Ms. Georgette “Gigi” Godwin, President and CEO, Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce, in an effort to locate businesses in the County that are invested in child care as it relates to the development and retention of the workforce (April 13, 2016)
- The full Commission met with Mr. Gabriel Albornoz, Director, Montgomery County Department of Recreation regarding afterschool and holiday care options for elementary and middle school aged children (April 20, 2016)
- The full Commission met with Senator Nancy J. King, Maryland General Assembly, regarding Senate Bill 312 and be informed about future initiative involving early childhood care and education. (June 15, 2016)

Testimony and Correspondence:

- Transmitted a letter to Council President Leventhal recommending the implementation of a post-audit process to review the completed RFP process by CUPF for Before and After School Child Care in MCPS elementary schools (August 7, 2015)
- Transmitted a letter to County Council requesting a hold be placed on CUPF's proposed regulations until completion of auditing process (November 24, 2015).
- Transmitted a letter to Dr. Rolf Grafwallner, Assistant State Superintendent, Maryland State Department of Education, expressing concerns about the proposed Maryland Early Care and Education Developmental Screening Program (March 16, 2016)

Priorities 2016-2017

Priority 1: Working Parents Assistance Program

To increase accessibility and affordability of high quality child care for all working families, the commission will analyze policy options set forth by the WPA workgroup. Use this information and the recommendations from the strategic plan for early care and education to provide further recommendations to the County Executive and the County Council.

Priority 2: Child Care in Public Space

Examine the results of the CUPF internal audit as it applies to Child Care in Public Space and additional information from child care providers and families on experiences during the CUPF bid processes in the spring of 2016 and in the Spring of 2017. Create recommendations for the County Executive and the County Council informed by the community and by the strategic plan for early care and education.

Priority 3: Continue to Educate Policy Makers About Issues Impacting the Child Care Community

Host an early child care education event on January 25, 2017 to inform and educate policy makers and other stakeholders about the ongoing issues impacting the child care community.



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Uma S. Ahluwalia, Director
JoAnn Barnes, Chief
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Commission on Child Care
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Language translation and alternative formats of this report are available upon request. For additional information on the Commission, please call or write at the address and telephone numbers listed above.

Montgomery County does not discriminate on the basis of disability in employment or in the admission or access to its programs or services.

